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AUTHOR Wettersten, Jill A.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of case studies that applied social exchange theory to examine the instructional leadership roles of four exemplary high school department chairs. Data were gathered at four suburban high schools in a large metropolitan area of the midwestern United States using the methods of observation and interviews with the chairs, teachers, administrators, and other building chairs. Findings indicate that the chairs engaged in similar leadership practices as middle managers within their different high school environments. The chairs maintained constant communication with administrators and teachers, delivered services and rewards, practiced collegiality, and treated teachers and administrators with respect, fairness, and sensitivity. Finally, by skillfully utilizing the exchange process, chairs acquired considerable informal authority that they used to carry out their tasks. Five tables and one figure are included. (Contains 52 references.) (LMI)

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LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS: FOUR CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL "MIDDLE MANAGERS"

Jill A. Wettersten

Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the
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INTRODUCTION

High school instructional leadership is generally associated with principals or teachers. A position of instructional leadership which has been frequently overlooked at the high school level is that of department chair.

Department chairs, as middle managers, represent their academic areas to the administration and the administration to their academic areas. While chairs often have numerous responsibilities from both groups, they have little formal authority with which to carry them out.

The purpose of this paper is to show how four exemplary high school department chairs increased their informal authority with teachers and administrators in order to carry out their tasks. Findings of this qualitative study reveal that each of the chairs engaged in similar leadership practices as middle managers within their different high school environments.

These leadership practices are as follows:

1. Chairs maintained constant communication with both administrators and teachers in their departments. By doing this, they were informed of problems and were able to determine how best to respond to them. They were also able to anticipate needs of both groups more easily.

2. Chairs made conscious efforts to consistently deliver services and rewards to members of their departments and the administration. For department members, they provided prompt responses to material needs such as additional supplies, furniture or classroom space. They provided responses to personal concerns such as help with student discipline, family problems, and career interests. These chairs gave helpful solutions to problems as well as sensitive encouragement, support, and praise for accomplishments. For administrators, chairs responded promptly to requests for information, suggestions, and implementation of policies. They kept "peace" within their departments, supported administrative "visions" for the school, and informed administrators of issues or events which might jeopardize positive school or community relationships. They were informed "servants" to their administration and to their departments.
3. Chairs related to teachers and administrators in a collegial manner. Teachers in the departments appreciated shared decision-making and opportunities for teacher leadership. Their own professional growth was enhanced by the services of the chair who empowered them to seek challenging responsibilities both within and outside the school. The chairs also related in the same

way to administrators. They were generally supportive of administrative policies but they also represented teachers' views on department and school issues clearly and frankly when there was disagreement with administrative actions. Lines of authority between administrators and chairs were fluid. Administrators treated chairs as members of the administrative team who happened to teach one or two classes. Similarly, lines of authority between teachers and the chairs were often blurred. Chairs often deferred to teaching colleagues whose expertise on issues surpassed their own.

4. The chairs in this study displayed the following personal attributes: trustworthiness and fairness as supervisors, competence as teachers and scholars, organizational and political skills as middle managers, and sensitivity as human beings to individual differences of both administrators and teachers. These qualities as well as the leadership strategies mentioned above enhanced the informal authority of the chairs in this study.
5. Finally, these chairs facilitated a series of complex but harmonious relationships between the administration and the teachers in their departments. These relationships were based on exchanges between the chairs and teachers in the departments and between the chairs and administrators. Teachers, administrators, and chairs

each "gave" and "received" material or psychological "rewards" as they attempted to carry out their responsibilities within a complex school setting. Chairs became valuable "bridges", "links" or "linchpins" between the two groups enabling both groups to function smoothly in their separate but related spheres. Despite limited formal authority, these chairs were able to create authority as instructional leaders within their departments and within their school by means of the leadership strategies and personal traits as specified above.

The findings of this study of four exemplary high school department chairs illustrate the potential of this position for teacher leadership opportunities within a high school setting. Not only were chairs, themselves, given opportunities to make decisions within their own departments, they also extended this opportunity to their teachers as well. Chairs shared leadership and decision making with their colleagues within their departments. This practice expanded teacher leadership opportunities for classroom teachers who wished to create additional challenges for themselves in their professional lives.

Cooperation and cohesiveness between the administration and teaching staff were facilitated by the consistent responsiveness, service, and supportive behavior of these

exemplary department chairs. Similarly, cooperation and cohesiveness between members of the departments were facilitated in the same manner. Chairs in this study were valued by both teachers and administrators as integral parts of the school administration and teaching staff. Their informal authority as instructional leaders and middle managers far exceeded the formal authority stated in their job descriptions. They represented in this study, as one principal in the study observed, "the most critical role at the high school level".

The paper is divided into the following sections: review of literature, conceptual framework, research design, findings of the study, discussion or analysis of the findings, a conclusion, and implications of the study for further research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into several sections: recent studies of chairs, instructional leadership in high school settings, departments as sub-cultures, "loosely coupled systems", and formal and informal authority.

Recent studies of department chairs. The amount of research on the subject of high school department chairs is limited compared to that of high school teachers and other secondary school administrators (Siskin, 1991; Hord and

Murphy, 1985). Recent studies of high school department chairs focus on individuals who not only have the traditional tasks of curriculum development and implementation within their subject areas but also the additional responsibilities of hiring, supervising, and evaluating teachers (Johnson 1990; Klein-Kracht and Wong 1991; Siskin, 1991; Wettersten, 1992).

These additional responsibilities offer department chairs opportunities for increased leadership both within their departments and within the entire school. Increased responsibilities and authority may enable these department chairs to encourage teachers within their departments to assume more leadership opportunities in planning and implementing curricular ideas, to mentor and coach other teachers, and to engage in other staff improvement projects of interest to them (Little, 1990; Johnson, 1990; and Siskin, 1991).

Recent research suggests that the sharing of ideas and experiences as well as the shared decision-making process is effective in accomplishing departmental and school improvements (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Greenfield, 1985; Schubert et al, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1984; Smylie and Denny, 1989). Department chairs can stimulate these processes.

If chairs teach at least one class, they play a dual role of teacher and administrator. As department representatives

to the administration they become "middle managers". Like middle managers, chairs withstand pressures from the top as well as from below (Siskin, 1990). Some see themselves as teachers first and as administrators second whereas others align themselves with administrative policies (Johnson, 1990). Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989), Hord and Murphy (1985), and Stuart Polansky (1986) describe one of the functions of department chairs as being that of serving as a communication liaison. Chairs fulfill this function in a number of ways: by communicating with department members and linking teachers with administrators; by interpreting administrative policies and department ideas; by communicating with parents and linking the department with the district; and by communicating with other departments by coordinating course schedules and student placements in classes.

Instructional Leadership in a High School Context. In this study, department chairs are referred to as "instructional leaders" by both administrators and teachers. This does not preclude that the characteristics and conditions associated with the term "instructional leader" can also apply to others in the school: teachers, department chairs, assistant and associate principals, and central officer personnel (Ginsberg, 1988; Greenfield, 1987; Little and Bird, 1987; Turner, 1983; Wimpelberg, 1987). The concept of delegated leadership has been evident for many years in high

schools, particularly where and when the principal does not have the time or expertise to personally take charge of the many responsibilities related to working with teachers in areas of curriculum, instruction, and supervision (Anderson and Nicholson, 1987; Glickman, 1991; Donmoyer and Wagstaff, 1990; Ploghoft and Perkins, 1988; Ward and Hildebrand, 1988).

Currently, literature on the topic of restructuring schools emphasizes instructional leadership based on collegiality and shared decision-making among administrators and teachers (Barth, 1987; Murphy, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989; Siskin, 1991). The principal may become not the instructional leader but the coordinator of instructional leaders (Glickman, 1991).

Given the wide range of descriptions and concepts of instructional leadership (Andrew, 1986; Dwyer, 1984; Greenfield, 1987; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rutherford, 1985), it is necessary to select one for the remainder of this study to give clarity and focus. Instructional leadership will refer to the coordination, supervision, and evaluation of curriculum and instruction within an academic discipline (Sergiovanni, 1984). This definition will apply more easily to high schools rather than to elementary schools because of its emphasis on academic disciplines.

One of the most significant differences between secondary and elementary schools is the department system which is organized around academic disciplines (Siskin, 1991). Classrooms, department offices, and even seating patterns at faculty meetings reflect academic segregation (Ball, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1984; Siskin, 1991).

Departments as Sub-cultures. Departments can become "sub-cultures" of the school which provide opportunities for communication, friendship, and other means of social, psychological, and political support for teachers (Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1984a; Owens, 1987). Yet, they may vary in terms of "closeness" or "distance" between members. Some departments are cohesive whereas others are impersonal (Johnson, 1990; Metz, 1990). In each case, the department is a formal group established by the school to serve as an organizational body for the purpose of achieving certain objectives (Ball, 1987; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1984).

Seen by Ball as a political coalition, the department operates best through mutual obligation and rewards (Ball, 1987). In most cases, department chairs need unity within their departments in order to implement policies as well as to defend departmental interests. Similar responses by teachers

to conflictual relationships with administrators have been studied by Anderson (1991), Blase (1992), and Marshall (1992).

Mansbridge, Marshall, and others present alternative perspectives of leadership which relate to shared purposes and decision-making more than adversarial tactics (Conway and Ables, 1973; Mansbridge, 1990; Marshall, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1984). Similarly, Greenfield (1985) and Hord and Murphy (1985) suggest that fostering cooperative relationships is part of the chair's responsibilities.

The dilemma of shared and conflicting interests extends beyond the parameters of individual departments to the arena of the entire school. Departments can cooperate and conflict with each other in the process of protecting their interests. Departments can become "fiefdoms" or self- contained entities based on fierce loyalties to their own leaders and programs (Ball, 1987; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Johnson, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1984).

Despite attempts to standardize much of the curriculum and school operating procedures, administrators in secondary schools must acknowledge teacher autonomy, independence, and idiosyncrasies. Teachers can also be collegial. They can share ideas, information, and cooperate with a group to accomplish a given task. However, chairs have no formal authority to demand commitment or cooperation within the department. Teachers choose to work together or decline to do

this. Literature in the areas of teachers' working relationships suggests this diversity (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1984).

One possible explanation for so much diversity in teachers' working relationships is that teachers have more autonomy than professionals in other settings, such as traditionally run corporations. Schools have been called "loosely coupled systems".

"Loosely-Coupled Systems". The departmental system contributes to an understanding of the concept of "loose coupling" associated with school organization. According to Weick (1982), groups within schools are joined more "loosely" to each other than in other organizations. There is less monitoring of behavior of groups. There are larger spans of control which make it nearly impossible for the principal to know what every group is doing at the same time. Consequently, there is greater autonomy among groups within schools than in other organizations.

The department chair is, therefore, a person with limited formal authority, in an ambiguous relationship as a middle manager, working within a departmental as well as school context which can be as loosely coupled as it can be tightly wound. How do chairs utilize informal authority to create cohesive and cooperative working relationships with both fellow teachers in the department and school administrators?

How do they carry out policies from above in addition to implementing ideas generated from within their own group?

Formal and Informal Authority. Discrepancies between formal and informal authority associated with the role of department chair cause much confusion, disagreement, and uneasiness within schools (Sergiovanni, 1984). Formal authority is an act or a series of acts clearly defined and given by a group (in this case a school system) to control human behavior so that it conforms to the group's structure (Greer, 1955). These acts or sanctions can be in the form of fines, firings, promotions or other ways of rewarding or punishing individuals for failing to conform to the desired behavior of the group (Greer, 1955). The ability to recommend tenure for second year teachers is probably the most powerful example of formal authority given to department chairs. Teacher evaluations are also a type of formal authority although salaries are not usually based on these evaluations. Assignment of teaching schedules which may or may not be based on teacher preferences is an additional example of formal authority used by chairs in this study.

Informal authority, like formal authority, shapes the behavior of individuals and groups. Spontaneous reactions of the group to an individual's behavior may alter his/her behavior to conform to the desired behavior of the group. Ignoring someone, being receptive to him/her or choosing to

assist someone are all effective in accepting or rejecting members of groups. These sanctions are unwritten but never forgotten and they are important to people who value social acceptance (Greer, 1955). The informal authority of chairs consists of the personal characteristics which they bring with them to the position. Academic competence, teaching expertise, warmth, decisiveness, ability to show appreciation and other personal skills are examples of informal authority which chairs may possess which give them influence over others in the department (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1984). Because the job of department chair does not have much formal authority, chairs rely most heavily on informal authority to carry out responsibilities (Sergiovanni, 1984).

A term given to another form of informal authority is "micropolitics" or the "strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of authority and influence to further their interests" (Hoyle, 1982). Studies of pursuits of self interest by teachers and administrators through political maneuvering have been published recently (Anderson, 1991; Blase, 1991; Marshall, 1991).

In summary, current literature about department chairs describes numerous responsibilities for chairs in handling material and human resources of the academic department.

However, these tasks carry with them little formal authority with which to implement them. Chairs must rely on informal influence within the department in order to accomplish jobs expected of them. The acquisition of rewards, punishments, and personal skills such as teaching expertise, academic astuteness, and trustworthiness are all examples of effective means of establishing informal authority for department chairs. Leadership skills in resolving conflicts or differences to establish shared values are also desirable for achieving departmental cooperation in achieving goals.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework around which the study is based is exchange theory. Exchange theorists suggest that social behavior is based on the desire for personal rewards and the weighing of costs (Blau, 1964; Ritzer, 1988; Blau, 1989). Rewards for chairs can be tangible such as increased budget allotments, scheduling preferences or approval of a project. They can also be intangible such as respect, trust, and cooperation. Relationships between chairs, administrators, and teachers can be either adversarial or consensual depending on to what extent both parties share the same values (Anderson, 1991; Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Greenfield, 1991; Mansbridge, 1990; Willower, 1991).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to examine the instructional leadership roles of four selected high school department chairs who have comparable job descriptions in somewhat similar school settings.

This study explores specific leadership practices of the four chairs to determine how they fulfill extensive responsibilities with limited formal authority.

The school settings for the study consist of four suburban high schools in separate districts included in a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. The school districts vary in numbers of schools in the district. School populations range from approximately 1200 to 2800 students. Minority student representation is from approximately 6% to 15% of the student body; the largest ethnic group is Asian. Achievement test scores and academic achievement are among the highest in the area in three of the schools. One school is slightly below the others in test scores and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status of families of students in the schools is upper middle class. Each school has extensive financial and educational support from the community. Average teacher salaries range from $50,000 to $58,000 per year. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Background Information on Chairs and School Settings April, 1991 to November, 1991

Topic	JHS	HHS	EHS	LHS
1. Number of schools in the district	2	1	2	2+
2. Student population (approximately)	1200	2700	1750	1550
3. Size of faculty	129	259	160	101
4. Total number of chairs	9	18	13	5
5. Number of years as chair	5	21	13	5
6. Chair's age range: 40-49	x			x
Chair's age range: 50-59		x	x	
7. Number of classes taught	1	1	2	0
8. Number of academic disciplines supervised	2	1	1	4
9. Number of teachers in the department(s)	21	28	14	26
10. Career department head	x	x	x	
11. Sees role as mainly administrative	x			x
12. Average age of teachers in the department	44	44	38	43

Job descriptions of each chair are similar. Each hires and fires teachers, supervises and evaluates teachers, and directs the curriculum and instruction in departments. Each chair influences general school policy as part of an advisory group of chairs which meets regularly with the principal and administrative team. The number of departments chairs supervise vary. Two chairs each supervise one department; one chair supervises two, and the fourth chair supervises four.

The study was designed to examine the position of high school department chairs in highly advantageous settings so as to maximize the potential of this leadership position. Chairs' opportunities for leadership are not obstructed by financial or socioeconomic problems within the local community. Districts were chosen which offer chairs a great deal of administrative responsibility and support in running the instructional program in their academic areas.

The leadership potential of this position was further enhanced by the selection of people who were considered to be "exemplary" in their jobs. "Exemplary" was defined as demonstrating excellence in working with administrators and teachers, excellence in departmental leadership, and credibility as a good teacher. Each chair had at least 4 years of experience in the school as a high school department chair. This study examines the qualities of these chairs' leadership strategies which enabled them to be labeled "outstanding" among all other chairs in their schools who were operating in the same advantageous settings.

The four chairs were chosen by recommendations from at least two independent sources: fellow teachers, administrators, and/or colleagues from other schools.

Four chairs, three males and one female, agreed to be "shadowed" during the school day for 3 weeks over a several month period. Their ages ranged from early 40's to late 50's.

All had Master's degrees and one had a doctorate. Two had been chairs for 5 years, one 13 years, and one 21 years. All but one had been teachers in the district prior to being selected as chair. Three consider themselves to be "career" chairs; one aspires to be a principal. Three chairs taught at least one class (one taught 2), one chair was released from teaching responsibilities for the last two years to take on special assignments for the district.

The field work began in the spring of 1991 and was completed in the fall of 1992. This arrangement was made in order to see the chairs during different seasonal phases of their work. Pseudonyms are used exclusively to protect the confidentiality of those who participated in the study.

Chairs were shadowed during as many of their activities during the day as possible. Data were gathered by note-taking of observations of the chair's activities and by note-taking of interviews with the chairs, teachers, administrators, and other chairs in the building. Teachers in the department of the chairs were interviewed based on years of teaching experience in the department, gender, responsibilities in the department, and on occasion, their distance or closeness in relationships with the chair.

Teachers, administrators, and the chairs themselves were asked to define the position of department chair as they saw it. Teachers and administrators were asked how the job of

department chair impacted on their own jobs. They were also asked whether they felt the position was a necessary one in the school.

Written protocols were developed from field notes. Printed materials were collected such as: job descriptions, school handbooks, historical information such as school newspapers and daily bulletins; copies of school policies were made when possible. Selected statistical information was collected from each school.

Confirmation of general conclusions suggested by the data was given by both the chairs and principals during debriefing sessions prior to my departure from the schools. Follow up confirmations of additional details were made with the chairs as needed.

Data were coded and analyzed according to established categories as comparisons were made between perceptions of people interviewed within each school as well as information collected by the "shadow". The constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis was used (Glazer 1969; Merriam, 1988). A synthesis of the coded categories was developed from which generalizations were established. These generalizations are the findings of the study and will be explained fully in the following section.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following case studies include brief descriptions of the school settings, the department chairs, and their jobs. These descriptions are part of a larger study which includes extensive quotations from the subjects, their administrators, and teaching colleagues which further illustrate the chairs' leadership strategies within the context of their school environments.

Case 1. Jefferson High. David Heintzelman. Chair.

David Heintzelman is the chair of the Social Studies and Foreign Languages departments. He is one of 9 department chairs in the school; one of two chairs in the school who has responsibility for more than one academic discipline. Both Social Studies and Foreign Languages departments are too small in number of teachers to have their own chairs. Combined, David is responsible for 21 teachers (approximately the average number of teachers for which a chair is responsible at Jefferson). Ten teachers are in Social Studies, and eleven are in Foreign Languages. David has been chair for 5 years in the district. He was hired as chair from another district where he had been a Social Studies chair for 5 years. He has been teaching for 23 years and claims that this is something he thoroughly enjoys.

David enjoys considerable autonomy as department chair. He is trusted to carry out administrative "vision" and

policies but his professional advice and counsel are sought by the administrators. As these administrators use the collegial model, they try not to undermine the chairs' authority, but, instead, they try to remove obstacles from their way. In return, chairs are expected to act as instructional leaders both within their departments and within the school.

David has an assistant chair in Foreign Languages, Michelle Nelson, who is a respected member of the Foreign Language department. The Foreign Language department had been frank and assertive in wanting a department leader trained in Foreign Languages who could give them guidance and teaching expertise in their specific discipline as well as more autonomy in decision-making in their subject area.

Of the four schools studied, this school district is the most specific in its expectations that department chairs are part of shared leadership practices. The printed philosophy statement for evaluating chairs states that chairs will be encouraged to maintain: "clear, interactive communication and shared responsibilities; trust and mutual support; continuing professional growth; flexibility within a predictable structure; and cooperation in achieving shared goals."

The administrative team in the building consists of the principal, an associate principal, and two assistant principals. Chairs are supervised by an assistant principal or the associate principal who is assigned to work with 3 to 4

of the chairs for a three year period. The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction is a highly respected and influential administrator who is also an instructional leader in the district.

The job description of department chair at Jefferson is very similar to that of the other schools in the study. Because of the similarities, the position will be described in detail only in this case study to illustrate the numerous responsibilities of the chair. Only significant differences from this job description will be mentioned in the other case studies.

The position of department chair at Jefferson is divided into five specific roles in the job description: (1) supervisor of instruction, (2) supervisor of staff (within the department), (3) curriculum development leader, (4) building administrator, and (5) link with the community (mostly parents). As a supervisor of instruction, the chair makes classroom visits, writes reports of these visits, communicates orally and in writing with teachers about these visits, and assesses teaching performance for the administration. After obtaining tenure, teachers at Jefferson may choose one of many different programs of assessment of their teaching performance or design their own. Chairs are responsible for assigning extra-curricular responsibilities to teachers in their department and also for encouraging professional development.

As a supervisor of staff, the chair's job is to develop cohesiveness within the department, minimize conflict, share decision-making, be democratic where appropriate, and enhance communication. As a leader in curriculum development, district guidelines emphasize the needs and interests of students as well as encouragement of teacher participation in the development of curriculum both as individuals and as groups. The chair is responsible for development, organization, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum within each department. Articulation meetings with junior high feeder schools is expected. As a building administrator, the chair is an extension of the principal's administrative team and it's policies. Preparing individual teachers' schedules within the department, arranging transportation for field trips including chaperones, class coverage, assignments of staff for extra-curricular activities, interviews and evaluations of new staff, and supply lists and orders for materials are tasks specified in the job description. Chairs prepare and implement the departmental budget. Chairs also handle discipline problems within their department, solve problems with parents of students in the department, and teach one class. Chairs, as administrators, are required by the State to have an administrative certificate.

David says that chairs are considered "administration" at Jefferson. He considers much of his job to be administrative.

He estimates that he spends 15-20% of his time teaching, 10-20% of his time with student council, 25-40% of his time on department matters, including supervision of instruction; and the rest, 35-40% on administration. Most of David's regularly scheduled meetings during the week are administrative.

Three building administrators and one central office administrator were interviewed for this study. Thirteen teachers from the Social Studies and Foreign Language departments were interviewed. Seven were from the Social Studies department; six were from the Foreign Language department. Teachers had from 1 to 20 years of teaching experience.

Case 2. Hamilton High. Bill Henry, Chair. Bill Henry, Biology teacher, is the Department Chair of the 28 teachers in the Science Department. He has been the chair for 22 years and a teacher in the district for 28. He distributes his time much like David Heintzelman of Jefferson. Bill teaches one class. He has taught everything from A.P. classes to lower ability students. Now he usually teaches whatever is "left over" after teachers give their preferences.

Bill is a senior member of the faculty who has influence within the school beyond that of being a department head. He was on the search committee which recommended the hiring of Lucia Bradley as principal. He was appointed by the

administration to a sensitive committee made up of teachers who review merit recommendations of master teachers in the school. He was recently elected to represent the department heads to the Faculty Council by the faculty at large. He is among the teachers who receive the highest merit ratings in the school.

The job responsibilities of department chair are almost identical to those of the chairs at Jefferson High. So are many of the collegial practices of the administration. For example, new teachers are hired by the administration but only with the recommendation of the chair and a team of department members who interview the top candidates. Bill reports to the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction but also to the new principal who shares a strong interest in curricular ideas. Bill meets regularly with the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction. He also meets with the principal both individually and with a small group or "cluster" of chairs on an informal but regular basis.

Unlike at Jefferson, the central office does not regularly get involved in curriculum and instruction aside from hiring and budgetary practices.

There are 18 department chairs at Hamilton. Not all have large departments such as Bill's. Chairs may teach more than one class, depending on their supervisory load.

Bill's department consists of 28 teachers. Like Jefferson, the department is the "home" of most of the Science teachers. Rarely is any one found in the faculty lounges. The department usually lunches together around the same table in the faculty cafeteria rather than at their desks. It is a closely knit groups of people, many of whom are good friends, members of the same church, and life-time teachers in this department.

Five administrators at Hamilton were interviewed about the position of department chair. All but one was a building administrator. Each of these people at Hamilton engage in numerous relationships with department chairs in carrying out their own jobs. Their jobs and those of department chairs impact on each other.

Thirteen teachers in Bill's department were interviewed. They ranged in years of teaching experience at Hamilton from 1 to 35 years. They ranged in familiarity to Bill from close friends to an "outsider" in the department.

Case 3. Edison High. George Kennan, Chair. The Social Studies department chair, George Kennan, has been teaching Social Studies in the district for 30 years. He has been the Department Chair for 13 years. He currently teaches 2 classes and is in charge of 14 department members, the smallest number of teachers supervised by one chair in this study. He also supervises a skills development center which he helped design

and staff a few years ago. He has hired 8 of the 14 people in his department. There are 13 men and one woman in the department although an additional female is on sabbatical.

George spends about 50% of his time on supervisory work. This percentage is higher than that of other chairs in the study because of the number of special programs George has established at Edison. One is the research program for advanced students who pursue an independent project over a two year period. This is an additional supervisory responsibility for him besides the supervision of the skills center which addresses over 22 types of developmental reading, writing, and thinking skills for students and adults.

The remainder of his schedule is divided between teaching and administrative work. He has some school committee responsibilities and the responsibility of negotiating with the superintendent regarding the salary schedule for department heads and other administrators. He believes that his teaching gets neglected more than other aspects of his job.

Like Jefferson and Hamilton High, Edison expects department chairs to be supervisors, curriculum developers, building administrators, staff developers, and links to the community. In other ways, the schools are different. George reports directly to the principal rather than to an associate. He reviews personal and departmental goals with Richard White

periodically. Richard gets a monthly report on department meetings to monitor curriculum work and progress towards goals. He also has both formal and informal meetings with department chairs to facilitate communication with the departments.

In this case study, three administrators were interviewed including the superintendent. These three are the administrators who have the most contact with George. They also have the most administrative impact on his job.

Eleven teachers from the Social Studies department were interviewed for this study. Teachers' experience ranged from 1 - 21 years.

Case 4. Lincoln High. Peg Curry, Chair. Lincoln is one of several high schools in a large school district. There are only 5 department chairs in the school. Because each chair is in charge of multiple departments, the term "department head" is inappropriate. These chairs are officially called "division heads".

Peg Curry, English and Fine Arts department chair, has been the chair for 5 years. A former English and Speech teacher, she has been in the district for 15 years. She has been in the English and Fine Arts department for 6 years, having been assigned to Lincoln as a teacher and peer coach the year before she became chair.

The English department dominates Peg's division in terms of numbers. There are 19 teachers (English and Speech) and one Resource Center person. Music has four. Art has two teachers. Distance between the teaching areas of Art and Music and the English office prevents daily contact between all departments.

Peg Curry is the fourth and final department chair in this study. Her job differs from the other chairs in the study in several ways. First, she is in charge of three subject areas: English, Speech, and Fine Arts (Art and Music) instead of one or two.

Like David Heintzelman, Peg has assistance in academic areas where she has limited expertise. One teacher who directs the drama productions oversees theater activities. A fine arts coordinator for the district who is based at Lincoln also teaches a few music classes in the department. Secondly, Peg is the only chair in the study who openly plans to move upward in the administrative hierarchy. Peg reports to the Associate Principal for Instruction, Bill Collins, who is in charge of curriculum and instruction and who is also mentoring Peg for a higher administrative position.

Peg does the supervision and evaluation of all teachers in her combined departments. Like George Kennan, she spends 50 per cent of her time on supervisory work and the rest on administrative work. Third, Peg is not currently teaching a

class although all other chairs teach at Lincoln. She has additional building and district responsibilities for writing special reports.

Fourth, as one of 5 division heads who meet regularly with the administrative team, she is part of the smallest group of "chairs" within the school compared to others in the study. This small group has the potential to become a closely knit autonomous group of leaders within the school.

Finally, another difference is that Peg's school is part of a much larger district than the other schools in the study. There are more than two schools in Peg's district which means, according to district policy, that there is coordination in programs and policies with the other "sister" schools. Peg attends meetings of her "job mates" or other English/Fine Arts chairs in the district in addition to building meetings. This is another additional time consuming activity for this chair.

Five administrators were interviewed about the position of department or division chair. Three were central office administrators and two were building administrators. Each of these building and district administrators have direct contact with the Division chairs from all schools in the district.

Eighteen teachers in Peg's department were interviewed. They represented all subject areas within the multiple departments: art (1), music (1), speech (2), and English (14).

Eleven teachers had over 20 years of teaching experience. The remaining seven had from 1 to 15 years of experience.

Interviews with administrators and teachers. In order to obtain information from teachers and administrators about the jobs of department chairs and how chairs function as instructional leaders, selected administrators and teachers were asked to respond to the following three questions:

1. How would you describe the position of department chair?
2. How does this job impact on your own job?
3. Is the position of department chair a necessary one?

Below are tables which summarize the most common responses of administrators and teachers from each of the schools to the first two questions listed above. Characteristics of chairs and how they impact on administrators' and teachers' jobs are listed in descending order based on the number of people who mentioned the topics. In all interviews, the position of department chair was considered to be a necessary one. Therefore, that issue is not included in either table. The numbers of teachers interviewed are included for each school compared to the number of teachers in the department.

Table 2. Administrators' Description of the Position of Department Chair

Total number of Administrators responding: 17	JHS (4)	HHS (5)	EHS (3)	LHS (5)
Descriptions:				
1. Instructional leader of the department with autonomy to supervise, evaluate, direct curriculum and instruction.	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Represents departments to building administrators and communicates information between them.	50%	60%	100%	100%
3. Resolves conflicts in the departments.	50%	40%	0%	80%
4. Possesses tolerance, flexibility, and credibility.	0%	60%	0%	100%
5. Provides services to teachers students, and directs staff development.	100%	0%	0%	0%
6. Creates "fiefdoms".	0%	0%	100%	0%

Table 3. The Impact of Chairs on Administrators' Jobs

1. Chairs implement school policies and school vision.	50%	40%	67%	100%
2. Chairs act as "Sounding Boards" for administrative ideas; bridge gaps between teachers and administrators.	50%	40%	0%	80%
3. Chairs see themselves as teacher advocates more than as administrators.	0%	0%	100%	60%
4. Chairs empower teachers as assistant chairs, teacher leaders; they develop professional growth opportunities for teachers.	50%	0%	45%	0%
5. Chairs help make decisions within the department as well as within the school.	50%	0%	40%	0%
6. Chairs are communication channels between teachers and administrators.	0%	0%	67%	0%

Table 4. Teachers' Views of Department Chairs

Total number of teachers interviewed: 55 n=teachers interviewed/ total in department	JHS (13/21)	HHS (13/28)	EHS (11/14)	LHS 18/26)
Descriptions:				
1. Liaison and advocate of the department to the administration on issues such as: scheduling, budget, supplies.	61%	62%	82%	39%
2. Curriculum coordinator.	38%	69%	73%	33%
3. Provides resources, supplies, and teaching ideas.	69%	85%	73%	0%
4. Serves and supports teachers; problem solvers.	38%	54%	0%	72%
5. Clarifies values and creates group cohesion.	38%	0%	73%	0%
6. Hires and fires teachers.	38%	69%	0%	0%
7. Helps with parent complaints.	0%	62%	0%	33%
8. Carries out administrative directives; middle manager.	0%	0%	50%	56%
9. Evaluates teachers and encourages staff development.	46%	0%	0%	33%

Table 5. Impact of Chairs on Teachers' Jobs:

1. Provides personal support.	54%	85%	64%	78%
2. Encourages faculty to try new things.	62%	85%	45%	72%
3. Creates collegial relationships in the department.	69%	85%	55%	50%
4. Gives autonomy for development of individual ideas; "treats us as professionals".	62%	62%	73%	56%
5. Encourages teacher leadership in curriculum development, hiring, and scheduling of classes.	62%	85%	45%	39%
6. Encourages professional growth including career movement and committee assignment.	31%	100%	55%	44%

(Quotations from teachers and administrators which support the topics listed above and how they develop within the context of each school's environment are found in a larger study which is being submitted as a doctoral dissertation.)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Expectations of chairs by administrators and teachers.

The responses of administrators to questions about the nature of the position of department chair and how chairs are used by administrators in each school indicate that department chairs are considered to be instructional leaders within their departments. Chairs supervise and evaluate teachers, coordinate curriculum and instruction, and are given autonomy to "run" their departments. Chairs affect administrators jobs

by keeping them informed of problems within departments and of teachers' opinions regarding school issues and policies. Chairs also are expected to implement school policies within their departments. Chairs are valued as "sounding boards" for administrators who rely on chairs' expertise as subject area specialists and as department leaders and managers.

Teachers describe chairs as "liaisons" to the administration who are expected to represent teachers' points of view on policies and issues. Chairs are also expected to provides materials, equipment, teaching ideas, and solutions to problems related to classroom needs. Teachers note that the greatest impact chairs have on their jobs is the support they provide. Personal recognition, encouragement to try new ideas, professional growth opportunities and career advancement are services and rewards of "support" valued by teachers. Collegiality, shared decision-making, and teacher leadership opportunities create cohesiveness and cooperation with departments. All chairs in the study were applauded by their department members for efforts to serve them in both their professional lives (and in some cases, their personal lives).

The expectations of department chairs by administrators and teachers may be summarized as follows:

Administration receives from chairs:

1. Communication about department concerns, needs, and reactions to policies and issues.
2. Commitment to administrative "visions" or goals.
3. Implementation of school policies and programs.
4. Peace and harmony within departments.

Teachers receive from chairs:

1. Delivery of services and rewards which contribute to better classroom performance of teachers and learning opportunities for students.
2. Communication about administrative policies and programs to which they may respond and have their views represented to the administration by the chair.
3. Autonomy and trust in teachers' professionalism both in experimenting with new techniques and in leadership opportunities within the department.
4. Fairness, support and encouragement in professional capacities such as classroom performance and career development.
5. Collegial relationships with teachers which build trust, cooperation, and cohesiveness within the department.

Expectations of administrators and teachers by chairs.

The chairs in the study were described as "middle managers", "liaisons", "buffers", and "bridges" by both teachers, administrators. One chair referred to his job of being a

"linchpin" between teachers and administrators. In order to be able to satisfy the needs and requests of those above and below, chairs engage in complex but purposeful leadership strategies designed to help them complete their tasks. All chairs, as observed in the study by administrators, teachers, and this researcher, and by their own description, carry out similar leadership strategies:

1. They communicate extensively with individual teachers and administrators.
2. They deliver services and rewards to both the administration and department members.
3. They develop collegial relationships with teachers and administrators, and support both administrative and departmental goals and policies.
4. When conflicts develop, chairs attempt to resolve differences through compromise, clarification of facts and meanings, and extensive empathy and personal support for individuals with problems.

In return for their help, chairs receive the following services and rewards from administrators and teachers:

Chairs receive from administrators:

1. Communication from administrators about ideas and policies being considered for adoption within the school which may or may not impact on departments. Advice and counsel of these chairs is valued by administrators. Similarly,

suggestions for solving departmental problems are given by administrators when solicited by chairs.

2. Autonomy to make decisions and implement ideas and programs beneficial to the department(s). Chairs are respected as instructional leaders in their academic areas, as skilled managers of budgets and scheduling, and respected for their personal skills in working with teachers in their departments. As such, administrators usually grant these chairs' requests for budget increases, scheduling accommodations, additional supplies, and professional growth opportunities as requested by chairs for their teaching staff. This extends the credibility of the chairs as people who "deliver" to their department(s).
3. Praise and recognition as exemplary leaders through formal recognition of completed projects, merit raises or bonuses, and personal thanks.
4. Acceptance and respect as fellow colleagues and administrators who share instructional leadership with principals and assistant principals within the school as part of an "administrative team".

<u>Chairs received from teachers:</u>

1. Communication about problems, needs, and other issues of concern to teachers with the expectation that the chair is trustworthy, knowledgeable, and responsive.

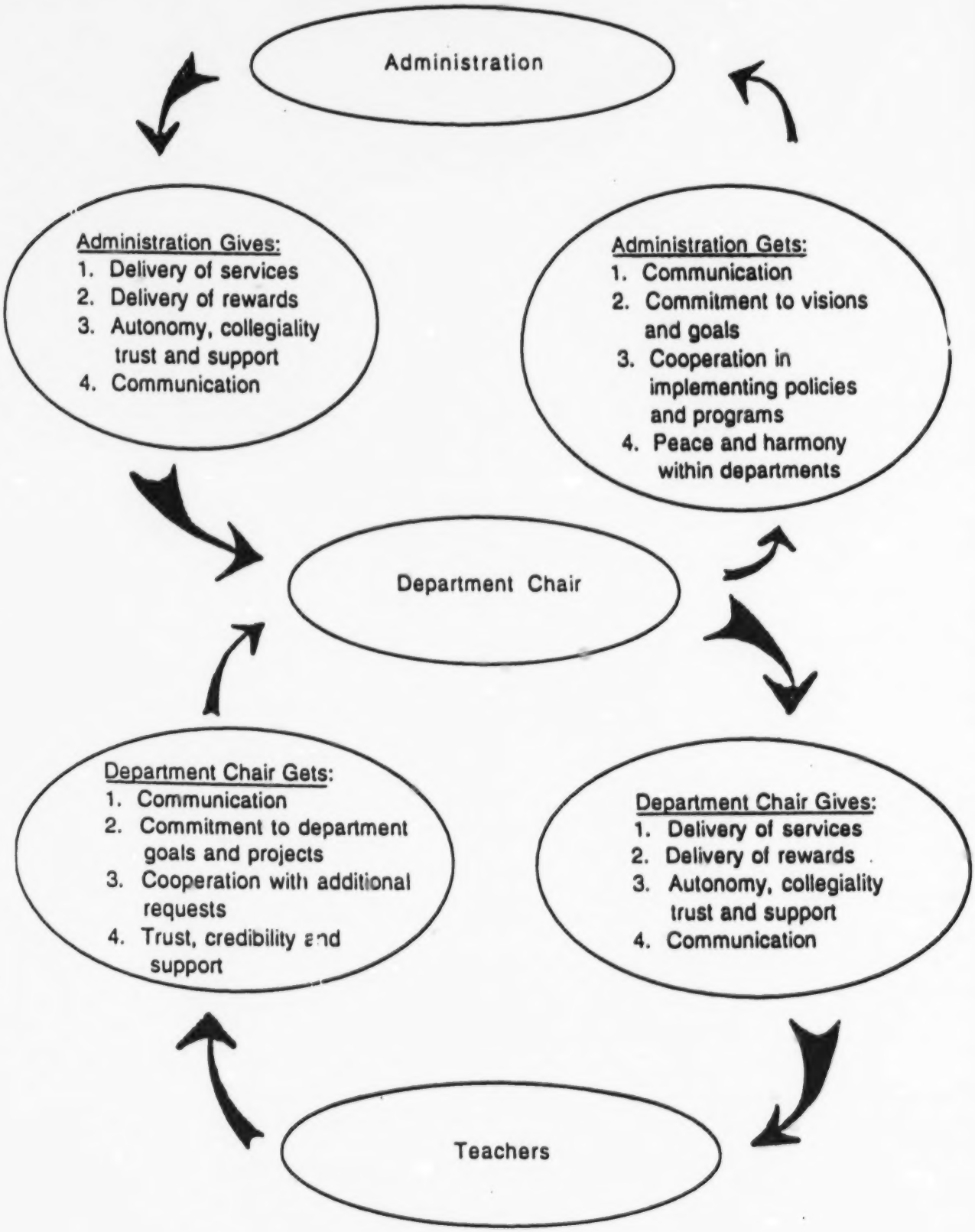
2. Commitment to departmental projects and group activities both academic and social in nature.
3. Cooperation with requests from the administration or the chair for extra paperwork, meetings to attend, and other additional favors.
4. Trust and respect as credible scholars, department leaders and managers, and considerate, sensitive human beings.

An Exchange Model for Department Chairs. The following model of exchange relationships between the chairs, administrators, and teachers illustrates the patterns of exchanges (Figure 1.). This model was developed from an analysis of field notes acquired by shadowing the chairs and also from interviews with administrators and teachers with whom they work. The model is a description of the series of relationships chairs sustain between administrators, teachers, and themselves as the chairs fulfill their responsibilities as middle managers. Implicit in the model is the assumption that the chairs must satisfy demands from above and below them without belonging exclusively to either group.

According to the findings of the study, the most significant strategies chairs engaged in as they attempted to fulfill their job responsibilities were:

1. Continuous communication of information to and from administrators and teachers in the department.

Figure 1. Model of Exchange Relationships Between High School Department Chairs, Administrators, and Teachers.



2. Delivery of services and rewards to department members which depended on administrative cooperation and support.
3. Distribution of autonomy, trust, and support to department members in a spirit and practice of collegiality. This practice of shared leadership was described as respect for teachers as "professionals" by department members. Chairs were treated the same way by their principals and other administrators.
4. Treatment of teachers and administrators with respect, fairness, and sensitivity; all of which were reciprocated.

The exchange model is based on reciprocity or exchanges between the administration, teachers and the chairs which enables chairs to exchange services and benefits with administrators and teachers. The chairs are the "linchpins" as middle managers. They keep the flow of information and deliveries of services and rewards flowing between themselves, the administrators, and teachers. In exchange for services and rewards, the chairs receive support, cooperation, and trust from teachers which the chairs pass back to the administration in the form of personal and departmental communication and support regarding administrative policies and programs. All groups, including the chairs, must give as well as receive in order for the exchange model to function smoothly, if at all.

The tact, astuteness, and sensitivity of the chairs as they understand and interpret information from above and below contribute to the communication between both groups. Shared decision-making is also facilitated by the ability of each chair in the study to understand and interpret significant themes and values within the school community. This provides a basis for commonality and cohesion between individuals and groups.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE EXCHANGE MODEL IN ACTION

The following episode at Jefferson High reveals how an issue or problem can be resolved by means of exchanges between teachers, administrators, and the chair which are initiated by the leadership strategies of the chair, David Heintzelman.

The Carl Jensen Issue. The following episode is an example of how David Heintzelman used leadership strategies to carry out his responsibilities as a middle manager at Jefferson High. This is one example of how exchanges can take place continuously to resolve a problem.

One morning David got a call from the superintendent inquiring about Carl Jensen's wish to withdraw his sabbatical request which was recently approved by the Board of Education. Carl was to take a sabbatical and spend the year teaching abroad. He would count that year towards his retirement and retire the following year.

David was very surprised. Carl had not told him about this and David was in the midst of interviewing candidates for the one year position vacated by Carl. The candidate would have an advantage when the position became available the following year when Carl retired. David and the administration had mixed emotions about Carl's sabbatical. Even though this was clearly an attempt for Carl to enjoy an overseas experience without returning enrichment to his teaching at Jefferson afterwards, the district would overlook this in return for Carl's absence from the district during the final year of his teaching.

Carl's reputation in the district was one of selfishness, arrogance, and disassociation from most cooperative and collegial relationships. The administration looked forward to his leaving even though granting the sabbatical was an inconvenience and added expense to the school. David had been interviewing candidates and had recently interviewed an excellent beginning teacher whom he might lose to another district if the interim position evaporated.

Jensen came to David's office soon after the phone call and explained that he wanted to withdraw his sabbatical request. Apparently Jensen had discovered that the sabbatical would not count towards his retirement and that he would have to pay over $20,000 until age 65 to maintain his insurance

coverage if he retired the following year after his sabbatical.

Afterwards, David immediately called back the superintendent to tell him Jensen had been in to speak to him and to tell him about the insurance costs. David then notified the principal (Frank Allerton) to inform him of what was going on.

> To the principal's secretary: "We've got a fire on the grill. Jensen. Carl is playing games...Frank will want to know."

David was hoping that the district would hold Jensen to the sabbatical but the district lawyers needed to approve this. David was not in a collegial mood about Jensen.

> We hope to take a hard line...He'd like to come back next year and teach full time. Then he would retire...If we hadn't started this hiring process it would be different. It's embarrassing to the district to withdraw an advertised position. He can't jerk us around at his convenience. ..He thinks there will be an incentive to put something extra into the recommendation to get this good teacher...He desires to be a "wheeler dealer".
>
> I go well beyond that which is reasonable. I give the benefit of the doubt. Then, I'll hold the gun to his head. What is good for the kids is most important. I will help Jensen through this for the sake of the kids. He's still a member of the department.

Later that night, Jensen called David and spoke with him for over an hour on the phone. Before school the next day, David and the principal had already met. The principal advised David to just continue talking with Jensen. The district would know in a few days what the solution will be.

Eventually, it was agreed to table the sabbatical in exchange for Jensen's retirement letter to take effect one year later. The hard line was impractical since Jensen had not officially signed a contract accepting the sabbatical.

> You can see that if you know what battles you can win, you act differently, said David.

David wanted Louise Carter, the desirable candidate, to be hired for a one year position in order not to lose her to another district. She would be eligible to apply for Jensen's replacement the following year. David was able to convince the principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent that Louise was one of those top 10% teachers often talked about as ones "you should hire and then find a place for!" David wanted the district to increase the number of teachers in Social Studies to make room for Louise after Jensen withdrew his sabbatical. They would be overstaffed for the next year. However, in exchange, the district would have an excellent new teacher. The administration "delivered" on David's request. They created a position for Louise for one year on the strength of David's recommendation of her abilities.

The decision to hire Louise was not without problems for David within his Social Studies department. The department liked Louise but there was already a part time teacher, Steve Morley, who was waiting for a full time position to open up. How would it look if Louise was hired full time and not him?

Already, some staff members had grown fond of Steve. Also, what would other departments say if Social Studies was getting an extra person while other departments were losing teachers due to declining enrollment?

David began his strategy to resolve potential conflicts by telling veteran teacher George Stone the details of Jensen's sabbatical withdrawal and the consequences for the department. Jensen's action would create an unfavorable class load for George. George liked Louise as a candidate and realized she had been a friend of his daughter's in high school. Through George the department would learn the truth about Jensen's "dealing" and Louise might be seen as a desirable addition to the staff despite Steve's presence.

The department members seemed to like Louise. David discovered that the only departmental reactions were simply: "that ass-hole Jensen". The department as well as the school saw themselves inconvenienced by Jensen. David hoped that it would be less evident that Social Studies was gaining special advantages in hiring or that Louise was replacing Steve. He hoped that administrative action would be perceived by the staff as simply making the best of Jensen's foibles.

The superintendent and Harold Donnagon, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, were both pleased with Louise. She had been "prepped" by David and the principal in how to impress them and what to expect from them.

By coincidence, the school board was meeting the next week and the superintendent could bring the issue before them for their approval. People would think that he had to get board support for this decision rather than to assume he had made the decision on his own on behalf of the Social Studies department and administration at Jefferson High.

Jensen submitted his letter of resignation, his sabbatical was tabled, and Louise was hired as a one year teacher. David felt that the department did not object to her being hired. She later proved to be the clear favorite over Steve who remained on as a part-time teacher.

David believes that the settlement of the Jensen issue was a "win-win" situation. This was largely because the district was able to afford Louise for one year while Jensen taught his necessary year for insurance coverage. Jensen got what he wanted, the administration got Jensen's resignation, David got Louise, the department got a good replacement for the arrogant Jensen, and a few teachers got a better teaching schedule with the addition of an extra person for one year.

The district administration made the final decision to hire Louise for one year and to keep Jensen on staff. However, the district was assisted by and also benefitted from David's expertise as a middle manager. He communicated with the administration and provided advice and assistance in dealing with Jensen and the department members. His autonomy

in the position of department chair enabled him to act decisively in his own department. He could utilise veteran teacher George Stone as a communicator of information to the department to avoid rumors and to keep the staff informed. David sought department input into the hiring of Louise while respecting their loyalties to Steve and Steve's sensitivities. In the end, David received praise and respect from the administration for communication, commitment to administrative policies and directives. He received assurance from his department that his confidence in Louise was justified. They eventually recommended her to be hired as Jensen's replacement. The department remained calm and harmonious on this issue throughout the school year.

The exchange model illustrates David's effective leadership strategies. He communicated with the administration and his department members to inform both about the Jensen issue. He also, in the process was kept informed by them of their reactions and responses to the issues and knew how to respond to them. He delivered services and rewards to both the administration and department in the smooth handling of Jensen. Finding a way to enable Jensen to retire satisfied everyone. Working out a way to hire Louise without causing suspicions of favoritism both within the department and outside the department helped satisfy both groups as well.

David's collegial manner of consulting with both the administration and key members of his department proved to be successful in establishing cooperation and harmony. His willingness to have his staff make the final decision about retaining Louise also illustrated the success of his shared leadership strategy. He served the administration by supporting administration policy yet he guided their decision to hire Louise.

David's personal credibility as a manager, his sensitivity to Steve's feelings, and his perceptions of how both the administration and his department would respond to his actions established trust and confidence in his leadership. Both the administration and his department seemed satisfied with his efforts. This success contributed to his informal authority as an effective leader.

CONCLUSION

The chairs in this study differ from each other in many ways: in personality type, age, gender, years of experience as chairs, and academic and personal interests. What they have in common is an ability to demonstrate extraordinary personal skills in relating to the variety of people with whom they work, resourcefulness in solving administrative and personnel problems, and expertise in developing credibility and trust as

capable educators. These personal skills are illustrated as the chairs engage in similar leadership strategies of:

1. Communication with administrators and teachers,
2. Delivery of services and rewards
3. Practicing collegial behavior with their staff.

Finally, the exchange model describes these forms of relationships between chairs, administrators, and teachers. By skillfully utilizing the exchange process, chairs acquire considerable informal authority which they utilize to carry out their tasks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are several implications of the findings of this study for further research. First, principals in this study preferred a collegial model of leadership. Department chairs, not principals, were considered to be the primary instructional leaders within their departments. They were considered by many administrators and teachers to be the primary instructional leaders in the school. By giving chairs authority and autonomy to function as chief administrators of their departments, principals in the study enabled chairs to not only share leadership but also to share responsibility for the smooth functioning of the school.

Secondly, administrative, supervisory, and teaching responsibilities given to the chairs in this study are

extensive. While the position of department chair has been described by administrators as one of the most important jobs in the school, it is also one of the most demanding ones. Despite the extensiveness and significance of the chair's job, no chairs in this study had prior training for their position as chair.

Another implication is that the position of department chair can become an additional career position for teachers who have strong interpersonal skills and administrative abilities. In turn, department chairs can create leadership opportunities for teachers within in the department and within the school by encouraging them to serve in leadership capacities both within and outside the district.

The emphasis on collegiality drew a strong, positive response from teachers. They appreciated being consulted as "professionals" on policy issues in which they were interested or about which they were concerned. These issues included curriculum, instruction, and assessment but also many additional ones. Positive morale and a cohesive, cooperative spirit within the departments may be attributed in part to the chairs' collegial leadership policies.

Finally, the leadership strategies and personal skills of these exemplary chairs may not be restricted only to professionals in affluent school districts. The opportunity or potential for department chairs to develop excellence in

instructional leadership may be found within a variety of school environments. Future research in testing these assumptions as well as those implicit in the exchange model lies in this direction.

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